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score members have responded to these appeals; some have recommended names of friends to be canvassed from the Superintendent's office; some have themselves canvassed friends and taken their application and initial membership dues; some members have done both these things. The great majority, however, have not responded to the appeal of the chairman of the membership committee for coöperation. Reference to another page of this MAGAZINE will show that about eighty members have joined the Society in the last three months. Some of these would have joined had there been no membership drive, but the great majority joined as a result of it. If through the coöperation of a small minority of the Society four score members have been gained in a few weeks' time, what would not be accomplished if to their efforts should be joined those of the great, and, as yet, inactive majority? One member has said that the Society should have 3,000 members; another has put the ideal at 7,000; and still another chides us for not having 30,000. We much fear that our weak heart would not withstand the excitement of realizing even the more moderate of these estimates, but we are willing to risk the experiment. We are putting our best not only into this MAGAZINE, but also into the many other activities of the Society. To the many members who have already coöperated in the membership drive we tender on behalf of Mr. Lacher and the membership committee our hearty thanks. Will not those who as yet have not responded to the membership appeal make it possible for us to extend thanks to them in the next issue of the MAGAZINE?

A MYTH OF DANE COUNTY EXPLODED

We once compiled a lecture on "Some Myths of American History," and on divers occasions afterward delivered it to more or less complacent, not to say enthusiastic, audiences. In the *Madison Democrat* of December 29, 1918, J. Paul Pedigo seems effectively to have punctured a myth of long

standing concerning the reputed "Great Cave" in the town of Verona, Dane County. If one can credit even such sober works as the industrious Durrie's *History of Madison*, less than a dozen miles from the state capitol dome is to be found a cave which fairly rivals in dimensions and in other natural attributes which a high-grade cavern ought to possess even the noted Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. For a stirring description of this natural wonder which soon, if only the dreams of enthusiastic city planners come true, will be included in the suburbs of Madison, we refer the reader to pages 278-80 of Durrie's history. Incited by this description and others of similar import Mr. Pedigo devoted his Christmas holiday to a visit to the cavern. His narrative of the wonders he did not find supplies the theme for our present discourse. In short our tourist was forced to conclude that the local historians were painfully inaccurate with respect, at least, to their accounts of the Great Cave. Its grottoes and corridors, its underground rooms and rivers he did not find; but only a tortuous passage, everywhere coated with "rich, black, slimy" mud, so small that to enter one must proceed on hands and knees or even on the stomach.

We are forced to pause at this point to indulge some disturbing reflections. How shall we explain the origin of the remarkable narratives the historians have given us about the "Great Cave"? How could they have been so grossly deceived about a natural wonder supposed to exist in their very midst, and concerning which the truth must have been known to many and could easily have been ascertained by anyone who would interest himself in the matter? A clue to the explanation is suggested by our recent investigator's closing statement that "the road to the cave is paved with humorists"; but why should a Dane County citizen who takes the trouble to write a book about his county permit himself to be "spoofed" by these humorists? If deception such as this is possible in the twentieth century, writing for a local con-

stituency on a subject with which everyone may be presumed to be familiar, what credence can we give to the historian's account of obscure events belonging to distant climes or vanished centuries? One final horrid thought shall conclude this train of reflections: We have never visited the Great Cave, and in the light of Mr. Pedigo's report we never expect to visit it. How, then, can we really know whether he himself is not spoofing us, under the impulse of a perverted sense of humor—whether the thrilling descriptions of the Great Cave recorded in our local histories are not, after all, plain unvarnished tales of simple truth?

WHISKERS

Social customs, like the Arabs, oftentimes "silently steal away," leaving the public unconscious of the change which their disappearance has brought about. We are moved to this reflection by the observation of a friend, looking at a collection of pictures of members of the Wisconsin legislature of 1862, "How much older than present-day legislators they look." The observation was correct, but did the facts in the premises bear out the surface appearances? Are our legislators of today a more youthful body of men than those whom our grandfathers chose to represent them? If not, why the more venerable appearance of the men of long ago? We think the answer is to be found in the word at the head of this article—"whiskers." The legislators whom our grandfathers delighted to honor were no more aged than those of today, but custom then decreed that a man's face should be adorned with a beard, while today the pendulum of fashion swings so far in the other direction that a cabinet officer can achieve a nation-wide reputation for bravery merely by supporting luxuriant mutton-chop whiskers.

Poor indeed is the modern historian, however, who cannot cite his authority for every statement he makes. To demonstrate our right to be numbered in the circle of the elect we